

2023

State of Iowa Disaster Public Information/Joint Information Center Operations

IOWA DISASTER RESPONSE

- During the response to a disaster, the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is responsible for coordinating the State of Iowa's response.
- State disaster response activities are coordinated in the State Emergency Operations Center, or SEOC, at Joint Forces Headquarters in Johnston.

STATE AGENCY ROLE IN DISASTER RESPONSE

- State of Iowa agencies have designated SEOC representatives that participate in response activities.
- Agency representatives coordinate with other responding agencies in the SEOC, make decisions on behalf of their agency, and act as a liaison with their agency leadership.
- State agencies are responsible for carrying out response functions in 15 areas, including transportation, public health/medical, public safety, and public information.

DISASTER PUBLIC INFORMATION

- As part of a response, the State of Iowa is responsible for keeping the general public informed about disasters affecting the state.
- The focal point for gathering and disseminating information is the governor's office and/or the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.
- Public information officers from additional agencies may participate in public information activities when their department or agency is involved in a disaster response or during a large or extended incident.

IOWA JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

- During a disaster that is large in scope, public information is carried out in the joint information center, or JIC.
- In the JIC, multiple agencies are able to coordinate the release of consistent, timely, and clear information to the public.
- The work of the JIC includes responding to inquiries from the media and the public, distributing information via traditional and social media, and creating incident materials, such as press releases and websites.
- State agency PIOs may be asked to support the JIC.

STATE AGENCY ROLE IN THE JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

- In Iowa's JIC, the governor's office is responsible for overall direction and control of disaster public information.
- For most disasters, HSEMD public information staff perform the necessary JIC duties in coordination with the governor's office.
- Depending on the type and scope of a disaster, JIC work may require additional PIO resources.

PRE-JIC COORDINATION

Public information activities may begin before there is a need for a JIC to be activated. Public information at this level will be coordinated by HSEMD and the governor's communications staff. If other state agencies are involved in the incident, coordination with their PIOs will be established. Work will be conducted from normal work locations.

Primary Activities

- Media response
- Press release development and distribution
- Social media messaging
- Website updating
- Governor's site visit planning

SMALL-SCALE JIC

For a small incident, the JIC will be activated for coordination of public information activities. HSEMD PIOs will participate in the JIC in coordination with the governor's communications staff. State agency PIOs may be requested to participate in the JIC, dependent on the type, size, and scope of the incident. Work will be conducted at the SEOC or remotely.

Primary Activities:

- Media response
- Press conference coordination
- Social media messaging/monitoring
- Website development and posting
- Coordination with incident partners
- Governor's site visit planning
- Response to public inquiries

LARGE-SCALE JIC

During a large-scale incident, the JIC will be activated for coordination of public information activities. HSEMD PIOs will participate in the JIC in coordination with the governor's communications director. PIOs from state agencies involved in the incident will be requested to work in the JIC. In a very large or extended incident, it is likely that additional state agency PIOs will be requested to staff the JIC. Work will be conducted at the SEOC or remotely.

Primary Activities:

- Media response
- Press conference coordination
- Social media messaging/monitoring
- Website development and posting
- Coordination with incident partners
- Governor's site visit planning
- Response to public inquiries

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE JIC

Website: homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/pio

- State of Iowa JIC Guide
- State of Iowa JIC Standard Operating Procedures

Contact: HSEMDPIO@iowa.gov